

#### House of Representatives

## 19th District News

Winter 1999



Representative **Brian Hatfield** 

Olympia address: 415 Legislative Bldg PO Box 40600 Olympia, WA 98504-0600

### Committees and Leadership:

(360) 786-7806

Co-chair, Financial
Institutions & Insurance
Transportation
Chair, Coastal Caucus
Legislative Transportation
Committee



### Representative Mark Doumit

Olympia address:

309 John L. O'Brien Bldg PO Box 40600 Olympia, WA 98504-0600 (360) 786-7870

#### Committees and Leadership:

Vice Chair,
Appropriations
Vice Chair,
Local Government
Natural Resources
Salmon Restoration
Task Force

Toll-free Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000 TDD (for hearing impaired):

1-800-635-9993

Brian Hatfield State Representative 19th Legislative District

#### **Dear Friends:**

Thank you for the continued honor and opportunity to represent our Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Pacific and Grays Harbor county region in your state Legislature.

The 1999 Legislative Session will address a number of issues involving every citizen of Washington. With the two major political parties represented evenly in the House of Representatives, you can be certain that bipartisanship and cooperation will be highlighted more than ever. The most popular word — and rightly so — in Olympia will be "moderation."

None of the issues are more important for our coastal and Southwest Washington communities than the topics in our newsletter today. These subjects consistently come up whenever people talk about what matters to them:

- Rural development. If we've said it once, we've said it a thousand times (and, believe us, we have said it a thousand times!) Towns and rural families outside the metropolitan Puget Sound region have been on the short end of the stick for way too long.
- **Salmon recovery.** Last session, we took a nice first step in the work toward a salmon-recovery plan aimed at helping bring the fish back. Now we've got to keep at it keep working on this statewide responsibility.
- Education. We need to remove the supermajority requirement school districts have to meet to pass levy and bond elections. Further, and every bit as important, we need to make sure there's an appropriate level of funding for special-education programs and services for districts in our timber and fishing communities.

There are other issues before us, of course, but these are certainly three of the most pivotal. As always, please don't think twice about getting in touch whenever you want to make your own points about something that's going on in the Legislature — or anywhere else in state government.

Best wishes,

Mark Doumit State Representative 19th Legislative District

Mark Down

#### Representative Brian Hatfield • Representative Mark Doumit

# ◆ Rural development: Once and for all, it's time for us to be 'one Washington'

It's no mystery that our state needs to get serious about economic development in rural Washington. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. We're talking about jobs for working, rural families. Fairness for working, rural businesses. And infrastructure for working, rural communities.

In a lot of places up and down our coast and in other Southwest Washington communities, the nightmare of unemployment and business closures is staggering families and towns. We keep reading about what a wonderful time it is to live in the urban and suburban areas around Puget Sound. But that's hardly the case everywhere. We need to create jobs — and we need to make sure they're the kind of stable, permanent jobs that working people can count on to support a family.

#### **♦** A decent deal for decent people

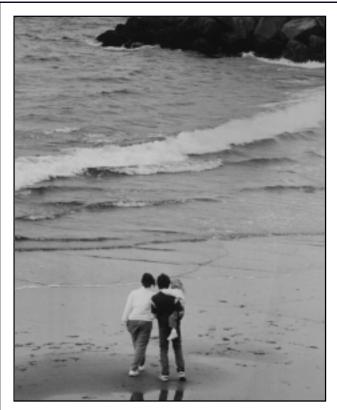
time we got an even break.

Wherever they choose to live, working people have a right to decent jobs, quality schools, and safe and healthy communities. But the spotted-owl and marbled-murrelet decisions, as well as the decline of salmon runs and the coastal-fisheries cutbacks have battered our region in recent years. These factors are out of our control — and they've hit our economy and job market hard. Our families and towns here in the real world have a right to the same opportunities as anyone else. The people in our 19th Legislative District have paid more than their fair share over the last decade. It's

Further, the new global economy — not to mention the turn of the century coming up — makes it even more important that we highlight the magnitude of a good education, good job training and, if necessary, good job **re**training.

# ◆ Salmon-recovery: Plan for bringing fish back must be fair for all state citizens

**Fairness had better be a hallmark in the new Legislature**, and one challenge in which this emphasis is particularly important involves the disappearing salmon runs in our state waters. The loss of one of our most precious natural and historical resources is every bit a wake-up call.



We must make sure that all families have an equal opportunity for a good life.

Why have our fish stocks declined so perilously in recent years? Often cited as a major culprit is the loss of habitat, and many observers also list hydroelectric dams, ocean warming, predators and harvest.

We need to remember that our state government doesn't control federal laws protecting marine mammals and migratory birds. (The federal laws covering predators, for instance, are particularly significant when you consider the damage done to the fish population by terns, seals and sea lions.) And we must also look to members of our congressional delegation to represent the state of Washington's interests before the Bonneville Power Administration, and in discussions involving international treaties on the high seas and tribal treaties on shore. Our state economy must not be a casualty in the drive to recover salmon and meet the terms of federal endangered-species and clean-water regulations.

Further, we need to keep in mind that ending harvest would not solve the problem. It's terribly important that commercial fishermen and sports fishermen recognize that **fighting among ourselves doesn't do any good for anyone**. We must see that a solution had better be

### 19th District News

found that works for everyone — or else it works for no one. It's true that finding a reasonable, appropriate level of harvest will be a factor in the overall solution. But harvest reduction, by itself, cannot be the whole solution.

#### **♦** A change in hatchery focus

State and tribal co-managers are revising hatchery practices to keep to a minimum the impact on wild stocks. Some of the key objectives involve a reduction in the competition for food and habitat space, and a curb on interbreeding (to protect the genetic code of each species).

The salmon-recovery plan must reflect the perspectives of all citizens who have a stake in this mission — **and that's everyone in our state!** The discussion table must include seats for commercial and recreational fishers, as well as farmers and other businesspeople. Also important are the voices of other urban, suburban and rural residents; local governments, and tribal representatives.

A solution must embrace the thinking of every Washington citizen as we accept this vital message: **Extinction**, **truly**, **is not an option**.

#### ◆ Education: Let's level the playing field for every parent and student

As you've probably noticed, the word "fairness" is a theme emphasized throughout our newsletter today. No reasonable person wants to cheat someone else — or some other part of their state — out of an advantage. But there's just no getting around this simple truth: Reasonable people have a right to expect a reasonable opportunity to live good and productive lives for themselves and their families.

But that's not happening right now for a lot of parents and students in the school districts of rural Washington. We need to make sure that students in all the different parts of our state have equal educational opportunities. We need to find a balance so that kids in Naselle, Ocean Park, Montesano,

Longview, Aberdeen and our other Southwest Washington communities get the same chance as kids anywhere else.

As it is now, taxpayers in rural districts are taking a disproportionate hit to their wallets and pocketbooks. Recent state budgets have provided a smaller and smaller share of funds for operations in local districts. That's not fair — and, according to our state constitution, that's not right.

The Washington Constitution calls the education of our children the "paramount duty" of our state. And we're not just talking about children whose families live in property-rich suburban districts where school taxes can be fairly low thanks to the presence of a large number of businesses.

Fairness demands that a young person's education—not to mention the tax bills that his or her parents pay—should not be determined by where the young person and his folks live. That's just common sense! One specific area in which we need to do a better job for rural districts has to do with the needs of special-education programs. Further, we need to provide better funding for the outreach programs in the community colleges of our region and the rest of our state—especially for worker retraining.

#### **♦** A boost for real democracy

Another big education issue is the supermajority requirement that school districts have to meet to win approval



All children should receive a quality, well-rounded education.

#### Representative Brian Hatfield • Representative Mark Doumit

for their levy and bond elections. Should students and their parents — as well as teachers and other citizens who care about their local schools — have to suffer through levy losses when more than half the electorate in the school district actually answers "Yes" to the proposal?

As it is now, though, our schools — the institutions we trust with a big part of our children's future — are forced to obtain a supermajority for their levy and bond proposals. That means they need to win 60 percent — not just a simple majority — of the voters' support! Between 1994 and 1997, 761 maintenance-and-operations levies were held in school districts around the state. Forty-six of the 171 levies that were defeated received more than 58

percent of the vote — only 22 of the defeated levies received less than 50 percent of the vote.

Too many districts have been ruled for too long by the minority. We should lower the requirement to 50 percent.

# ◆ Transportation: Big questions ahead need evenhanded decision-making

The November approval of Referendum 49 transfers money from the general fund to pay for highway projects around the state. According to other terms of the referendum, additional state funding will be provided for city and county governments — including money for local criminal-justice programs.

We must tackle some tough questions. And they're tough not just in terms of making the regular budget work without the money that's now going to transportation. They're also troublesome questions in terms of



Southwest Washington working men and women deserve to share the same economic and development benefits as the urban regions.

deciding where the money will go for transportation projects. In the short term, the referendum will take \$40 million out of the general budget for the rest of the 1997-99 biennium. And in the longer term, we'll have \$471 million less to use for education and other programs in the 1999-2001 budget period.

Whether we supported it or not, the referendum was passed by the voters and it has become the law of our state. Now more than ever, legislators need to put partisan differences aside and work for what's best for all of our citizens.

(But that doesn't mean we'll be any less adamant in supporting transportation needs and projects in the Grays Harbor area and in the rest of our Southwest Washington region!)

# ◆ Public safety: Assuring good fire protection in Washington's coastal communities

We need to guarantee that our coastal towns and communities — no less than the other areas of our state located outside the Puget Sound region — receive top-level fire protection.

And that's why we'll be striving toward improvement in the training that firefighters in rural communities receive for the lifesaving and property-protecting work they do.

In a big way, this emphasis fits right in with our responsibility to make (and keep) our state "one Washington," instead of having a relatively prosperous urban and suburban area around Seattle — and then all the rest of us.

One piece of positive news from the last legislative session, by the way, was that we approved a measure to

### 19th District News



Fire and other emergency protection in our rural areas is every bit as important as it is anywhere else.

enhance funding for the 911 emergency system in rural communities. And we did get some money for local community-network groups that coordinate services for families in need. That's a good start — and we've got to keep the ball rolling for just this sort of fairness.

Frankly, we have some serious problems in this state. And not just in the rural communities, either.

We've got overcrowded classrooms. We've got low- and medium-income working people who can't afford health insurance for their kids. We've got overcrowded jails and a Legislature that has recently piled on new anti-crime laws without providing an appropriate level of funding to pay for them.

Talk is cheap, but putting people in jail isn't. It's that "Let's write a bunch of new laws and get someone else to pay for them" attitude in Olympia that we simply must put a stop to.

#### **♦ New service:**

## Cowlitz, Wahkiakum families can catch a bus to nearby counties

The Lower Columbia Community Action Council recently started a very helpful new transportation program for residents of Cowlitz County and Wahkiakum County.

A connecting service to Pacific, Lewis and Clark counties is provided in this new program.

All Cowlitz and Wahkiakum residents can use the service for medical, shopping, visiting or any other reasons. The price is \$1 for each one-way trip.

- Every weekday, citizens in Cathlamet, Castle Rock, Lexington and the Longview/Kelso area can take advantage of the service with arrivals and departures in various locations.
- On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, citizens in Longview/Kelso can catch a bus and go south on Interstate 5 to Kalama, Woodland and Vancouver.

#### Representative Brian Hatfield • Representative Mark Doumit

- On Tuesdays and Thursdays, citizens in Longview/ Kelso can go north on I-5 to Castle Rock, Toledo, Vader, Winlock, Napavine and Chehalis.
- On the first and third Thursdays every month, citizens can also take advantage of service for Naselle.

The Community Action Council is working to expand the transportation services in the future, and they're also accepting applications from people who'd like to volunteer to drive one of the buses.

If you want more information about the program (including a specific schedule of the times and locations of the arrivals and departures), please call the CAP Transit office in Longview at **360-425-3430**. Their toll-free number is **1-800-383-2101**.

Through the Rural Mobility Grant Program, the Washington State Department of Transportation provided funding for the Community Action Council's transit-service extension. The funding is scheduled to run through June of this year.

## ◆ Free eye tests: Low-income families can

obtain comprehensive exams

Qualified citizens can take advantage of a free eyeexamination service provided the first week in March by the Washington Association of Optometric Physicians. Low-income, working citizens can obtain a free, comprehensive eye exam — as well as corrective lenses and eyeglass frames for a nominal fee. This Washington VISION USA project, which is part of a national effort sponsored by the American Optometric Association, is in its ninth year.

The exams will be offered during Save Your Vision Week, scheduled for March 1-7, 1999. Interested citizens should call (toll-free) **1-800-766-4466** during the month of January to apply for the service. You may also write for an application to: **VISION USA, 243 N Lindbergh Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63141**. Further, you can use the Internet to submit an application (**www.aoanet.org** is the Internet address).





Representative Brian Hattield Representative Mark Doumit

